



The Sixty-ninth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,843rd Concert

Joel Fan, pianist

June 5, 2011
Sunday, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Ernesto Nazareth (1863–1934)

Tango for Piano: *Vem cá, branquinha* (1907)

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)

Chôros no. 5, for piano, A. 207 (“Alma brasileira”) (1925)

Margaret Bonds (1913–1972)

Troubled Water (1967)

Dia Succari (b. 1938)

La nuit du destin

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Sonata no. 31 in A-flat Major, op. 110 (1822)

Moderato cantabile, molto espressivo

Allegro molto; coda

Adagio ma non troppo; fuga

INTERMISSION

Aleksandr Scriabin (1872–1915)

Sonata no. 5, op. 53 (1907)

Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951)

Three Piano Pieces, op. 11 (1909)

Mässig

Mässig

Bewegt

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Piano Sonata no. 2 in B-flat Minor, op. 35 (“Funeral March”) (1837–1839)

Grave; doppio movimento

Scherzo

Marche funèbre: Lento

Finale: Presto

The Musician

Acclaimed as a “versatile and sensitive” pianist by the *Washington Post* and “a technical wonder” by the *Los Angeles Times*, Joel Fan began his performing career with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra at age eleven, as a winner of the Philharmonic’s Young People’s Concert Auditions. He has since appeared in recital with the Albany Symphony, Greater Bridgeport Symphony, Marion Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Pueblo Symphony, and Rhode Island Philharmonic orchestras, as well as Santa Fe Pro Musica. Internationally, Fan has collaborated as soloist with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, the New Symphony Orchestra of Bulgaria, the London Sinfonietta, and the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, under conductors Alan Gilbert, Gustav Meier, David Alan Miller, Larry Rachleff, David Robertson, and David Zinman.

Joel Fan’s eclectic solo repertoire spans traditional piano classics, newly commissioned works, and his own piano transcriptions and cadenzas. His commitment to music of our time has led to the world premiere performance of Leon Kirchner’s *Sonata no. 3* (“The Forbidden”) in 2006, and a 2007 performance of Daron Aric Hagen’s *Concerto for Left Hand* (“Seven Last Words”) with the Waukesha (Wisconsin) Symphony Orchestra.

Fan’s debut solo recording, *World Keys*, was released in 2006 on the Reference Recordings label. A prizewinner in several international competitions, including the D’Angelo Young Artists International Competition in the United States and the Busoni International Piano Competition in Italy, he was named a Presidential Scholar by the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts.

Fan is a member of Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Ensemble, with which he has appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Kennedy Center, and Symphony Center in Chicago. A native New Yorker, Fan received a bachelor of arts degree from Harvard University, where his teachers included composer Leon Kirchner. He also holds a master of music degree in piano performance from the Peabody Conservatory of Music, where he was a student of Leon Fleisher. A Steinway artist, Joel Fan appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Barrett Vantage Artists (www.barrettvantage.com).

Program Notes

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, composer Ernesto Júlio de Nazareth was raised in a family with modest means and began his piano studies with his mother. In spite of being largely self-taught — his mother died when he was ten years old — Ernesto wrote a piece that was deemed worthy of publication at age fourteen. He eventually became the most popular Brazilian composer of his time, and had a profound influence on the future of both classical and popular music in Brazil. *Vem cá, branquinha* (Come Here, Little White Woman) is a colloquial expression of endearment.

In the next generation, Heitor Villa-Lobos succeeded de Nazareth as Brazil's most popular composer. After studying European classical music throughout his youth, Villa-Lobos spent part of his later years learning native Brazilian musical styles from local popular musicians in Rio de Janeiro. He developed a skill for improvisation in the style of *chôros*, Brazilian renditions of the polka and other European dances usually performed on wind instruments and percussion. "Alma brasileira" (Brazilian Soul) is the subtitle he gave to the fifth piece in his *Chôros* series, a quiet, highly expressive piano piece in which a slow, yearning melody expands over a syncopated ostinato figure in the bass.

Born in Chicago, pianist and composer Margaret Allison Richardson Bonds was twenty years old in 1933 when she became the first black American to solo with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She wrote music for orchestra, choral music, and arrangements of black American spirituals, some of which were sung by the legendary soprano Leontyne Price. In *Troubled Water*, Bonds uses material from the spiritual "Wade in the Water." Often used as a form of secret communication among slaves, spirituals have a powerful emotional history. In describing this work, the poet Maya Angelou writes: "This beautifully crafted work states the refrain and verse of the spiritual in various guises. The broad sweeping melody is initially spiced up by complex rhythmic accompaniments and harmonized with elements of the blues and jazz. It is then restated in a more languid tempo, beautifully embellished in the gospel tradition of piano performance."

A native of Aleppo, Syria, Dia Succari finds inspiration from the native rhythms and traditional folk themes of his homeland and its neighboring countries in the Middle East. Of special interest to Succari are the *santour* (similar to the hammered dulcimer) and *muqam*, a system of modal music that is based in Persian and Arabian tradition. Succari's *La nuit du destin* (The Night of Destiny) refers to a night of prayer and spiritual illumination. It combines traditional Western compositional style — notes and rhythms specifically notated — with interior sections where the pianist has the liberty to improvise in a style called *taksim*. In these sections, the pianist imitates the *santour* in the soft ripple produced by his left hand and the plucked intensity of the *ud*, a Persian lute, in the louder staccatos.

One of his most personal compositions, the *Sonata in A-flat Major*, op. 110, is the only work Beethoven completed in 1821. Though it is sometimes overshadowed by other late sonatas — including op. 106 (“Hammerklavier”) and the final sonata, op. 111 — it is equally as impressive and awe-inspiring. Beethoven was ill while he was composing this sonata, and there is a sense of impending doom — perhaps a reflection of his own mortality — throughout the piece. In spite of its sober undertone, or perhaps because it spoke to a prevalent mood in German society at the time, the sonata was greeted with much success after its first public performance in 1824. The German music magazine *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* reported: “It is a work in every respect wholly excellent, extremely melodious throughout, and rich in harmonic beauties.”

Aleksandr Scriabin's *Piano Sonata no. 5* marks a turning point in his compositional style from romantic to atonal. By making no attempt to have a tonal center and containing the entire sonata in one long movement, Scriabin breaks away from traditional tonality and multi-movement sonatas. One of the most difficult pieces in the piano repertory, this work is nevertheless the most frequently performed and recorded of the composer's sonatas. Scriabin included an epigraph in the score, taken from his long poetic work *The Poem of Ecstasy* — not to be confused with his *Symphony no. 4* (“Poem of Ecstasy”), op. 54. The epigraph reads: “I summon you to life, hidden longings! You, drowned in the dark depths of the creative spirit, you fearful

embryos of life, I bring you daring!" The piece consists of five themes that intertwine and evolve throughout the piece: the intense, dissonant trill and glissando in the opening; a slow, languishing introductory theme; a dance-like *presto* based on material from the opening theme and serving as the first subject group; a transition marked *imperioso*; and a *meno vivo* that serves as the second subject group.

Arnold Schönberg's *Three Piano Pieces*, op. 11, is considered by musicologists to be his earliest consistently atonal opus and a landmark of great historical and musical significance. The radical and sudden departure from what he produced prior to this opus also coincided with some turbulent events in Schönberg's personal and professional life—his *Second String Quartet* (1908) had been received unfavorably, and his wife, Mathilde, had left him to marry the painter Richard Gerstl. Though remnants of late romanticism can be heard in the piano pieces, Schönberg was expressing deep convictions about the future of music.

Chopin composed his *Piano Sonata no. 2 in B-flat Minor*, op. 35 ("Funeral March") during a sojourn in 1839 at Nohant near Chateauroux in France, although the funeral march that eventually became the third movement had been composed two years earlier. The sonata was the target of much criticism when it was first heard, since it was not considered a cohesive sonata in the classical sense. Schumann was the first to remark that Chopin "had assembled four of his maddest children together under the same roof." In recent years musicologists have found previously overlooked qualities that in fact bind the work together. Despite its unorthodox treatment of the form, in the end, this sonata is a painstakingly crafted composition that highlights the crowning jewels of Chopin's genius—his gift for keyboard writing and beautiful melodies.

Program notes by Danielle DeSwert Hahn

Notes on Dia Succari by Joel Fan

Final Concert of the Season at the National Gallery of Art

Texas Children's Choir
Thomas Hardaway, director
Anne-Marieke Evers, mezzo-soprano

Seventeenth-century music from the Netherlands

Presented in honor of *Gabriel Metsu, 1629–1667*

June 12, 2011
Sunday, 6:30 pm
East Building Auditorium



Concerts resume on September 18, 2011

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of the West Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

For the convenience of concertgoers, the Garden Café remains open for light refreshments until 6:00 pm on Sundays.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

www.nga.gov